

STRENGTHEN EMERGENCY NATIONAL MOBILIZATION

The Selective Service System should be maintained and improved so that the United States is prepared in the event of a national emergency that would require mandatory military service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission proposes a series of recommendation to modernize and improve the country's ability to draw on the talents, skills, and abilities of all Americans to respond to a national emergency.

- **Maintain a military draft mechanism and retain active registration.**
The Selective Service System serves as a low-cost insurance policy in the event of military personnel shortages and demonstrates national resolve. Should the country be faced with a national emergency so significant it must activate conscription, the United States needs a tested, reliable, responsive system—rather than one created amid such a crisis.
- **Develop voluntary models for accessing personnel in an emergency, especially those with critical skills.**
Enhancing the American tradition of first seeking volunteers to meet national needs, the President and Congress should take steps to encourage Americans to voluntarily join the military through an official call for volunteers prior to resorting to a draft. The Commission further proposes leveraging this spirit of volunteerism through new models to access individuals with critical skills, including a critical skills Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) and a national roster of volunteers.
- **Improve the readiness of the national mobilization system through whole-of-government leadership, regular exercises, and improved public awareness.**
Ensuring the United States is able to respond to a national emergency requires reviewing institutional and organization functions that have not been exercised in the 21st century, holding government entities accountable by identifying officials who are responsible for coordinating processes, conducting regular exercises of plans and procedures for national mobilization, and educating the American public about the purpose of the system.
- **Convey to all registrants their potential obligation for military service.**
The rise in secondary registration systems—such as enabling applicants for driver's licenses or Federal student aid to simultaneously register with the Selective Service System—has generated high compliance rates but obscured the system's transparency. It is critical that Americans are aware of their civic duty in the event of a national emergency.

For more information about the Commission's recommendations on Strengthening Emergency National Mobilization, please see Pages 87–110 of [*Inspired to Serve: The Final Report of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service*](#).



THE TIME IS NOW: EXPAND REGISTRATION TO ALL AMERICANS

Selective Service registration provides the President with a pool of individuals for all military positions —combat and noncombat—in the event a draft is enacted by Congress and the President. The Commission was charged with determining whether all Americans should register for a potential draft.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission determined that expanding registration represents a necessary and overdue step that furthers the national security of the United States.

Expand Selective Service registration to all Americans.

Requiring all Americans to register with the Selective Service System ensures that in the event of a national emergency, the Nation can call upon the talents, skills, and abilities of everyone who is qualified and capable.

Extending registration would:

- **Strengthen national security by harnessing America's full talent.**
Data indicate that young women are equally likely to qualify for military service as young men. Should the nation require a draft, doubling the pool from which the country obtains conscripts would preserve standards in a conflict.
- **Affirm registration as a common civic duty.**
It is the equal obligation of all Americans to defend the nation if called to do so. The current process of registration includes those who are ineligible for military service under today's All-Volunteer Force standards to limit inequities and set expectations of civic duty. Extending registration to women reaffirms registration as a civic duty and sets national expectations on who may be called to serve in advance of an emergency.



An Army officer calls for artillery fire in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Source: U.S. Army.

For more information about the Commission's recommendations on Strengthening Emergency National Mobilization, please see Pages 111–123 of [*Inspired to Serve: The Final Report of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service*](#).